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4. — 1. *The Annals of Rural Bengal.* By W. W. HUNTER, etc., of the Bengal Civil Service. Second Edition. New York : Leypoldt and Holt. 1868. 8vo. pp. xvi., 475.
2. *A Comparative Dictionary of the Languages of India and High Asia, with a Dissertation. Based on the Hodgson Lists, Official Records, and MSS.* By W. W. HUNTER, etc., etc. London : Trübner and Co. 1868. Large 4to. pp. xii., 224.

MR. HUNTER has produced one of the most entertaining and valuable works on India that we have seen in a long time. It is replete with acute observation, vivacious description, and high-toned humanity. It is the fruit of many years' experience as one of the administrators of English sovereignty in the country, and of profound researches among all available records of the recent history of the Hindus, whether of their own making or prepared by their conquerors. It is one of those books which are needed to form the complement of all elaborate so-called histories. It depicts the life of the people, — the virtues and failings, the wrongs and sufferings, the religion and superstitions, of the real inhabitants of the country. It is written almost from the native point of view, — only the eyes that look are English, and see a great deal that native eyes would not see. Mr. Hunter is in complete sympathy with the native population, and feels acutely what is the position of his own countrymen among them, what his own and his fellows' responsibility and duty toward them. No one of whom we know has been able, or willing, to throw so vivid a light upon the actual workings of British rule, as affecting the happiness of its subjects. His feelings side not only with the subject people, but with the subjects of those subjects, with the dark-skinned aboriginal races, whom the more highly gifted tribes of Aryan intruders long ago dispossessed and drove into the jungles and the mountains, and have since treated as serfs or as hunted outlaws, but whom the inexorable equity and wider humanity of the new dominion are beginning to regard as men with rights, and even with qualities and capacities which may make them valuable members of the body politic. Of these despised gentiles Mr. Hunter is the especial friend and advocate, striving to teach us how to understand them and take an interest in them.

It would be a profitable task to go through this volume, sketching its varied and attractive contents ; but we must refrain. Not many, we are sure, who take it into their hands will be willing to lay it aside till they have read it all. Our principal business is with a specific portion of it, — the linguistic, — upon which we cannot bestow the same almost unqualified approbation as upon the remainder. Mr.

Hunter is strongest as a popular historian ; he is less successful as an ethnologist and a philosophizer upon creeds and customs and their connections ; he is weakest of all as a linguist. These last are subjects with which his previous training has not prepared him competently to deal. His sketch of the language of the Santals—the race of aborigines in Southern Bengal, which has principally attracted his attention, and to which he devotes a considerable part of his volume—is, indeed, a valuable contribution to science ; here he is on safe ground, and treating of matters within his reach. But when he steps aside to take up themes in general linguistic science and philosophy, he shows, along with something of the aggressive vigor of thought and incisiveness of expression which are indefeasible characteristics of his way of working, a want of comprehensive knowledge, and of what that alone can procure, a sound critical judgment. He has, like all beginners, his hobbies, and his favorite authorities, to whom his mind is over-submissive. For example, he has been captivated with Schleicher's method of algebraic notation of the differences of linguistic structure, and makes much of it, constantly styling the agglutinative languages “Schleicher's compounding class,” as if that scholar had any peculiar ownership in the classification, which is, rather, the common property of the systematicians of this generation,—and, we may add, not a little overrated in value by the majority of them. That he has not studied Schleicher too faithfully, however, is shown by his wonderful perversion of the latter's view of the development of the original Indo-European alphabet of fifteen consonantal sounds in the use of the Hindus into one of thirty-four, in which are to be traced signs of the influence of the native languages of India, into the statement, that, “according to Schleicher, the Sanskrit alphabet originally contained only fifteen consonants, and adopted nineteen from the aborigines” ! Not from Schleicher, however, nor from any other sound writer on human speech, has he derived even the hint of his doctrine concerning the respective parts played by “pronouns and roots” in the development of language. Roots he represents as the inert matter of speech, vivified by the pronouns ; the former stand for ideas, indeed, but for ideas divested of the predicate of position in space or time, which must be added to them by means of the pronouns in order that they may become locomotive and manageable. Like many theorizers about language, he mixes up thought and expression, and imports into the synthetic conception and crude sign-making of the earliest speakers the refined abstractions belonging to an age of trained and cultivated thought. With precisely as much reason he might demand, as essential, a class of elements signifying actuality of existence, or finiteness, or color and form, or any other of a score of

the constituent attributes which we recognize as belonging to our ideas of objects.

Not less striking is Mr. Hunter's exaggeration of the importance attaching to the Santal people, their institutions, their legends, their dialect, the tribes with which they are connected. The mysteries of Hindu caste and Hindu religion are going to be solved by comparison with Santal customs. It is probably from the Santal that the Sanskrit has obtained those important additions to its meagre alphabet already spoken of. The Santal traditions and the relations of Santal speech promise to illustrate the course of the immigrations which gave India its aboriginal population, in times for which "pre-historic" would be a most modest appellation. The study of Santali is, perhaps, to do for the agglutinative tongues what that of Sanskrit has done for the inflecting tongues; and so on. All this is very loose talk, and exhibits a radical misapprehension of the present condition and needs of ethnological and linguistic science. We see no reason for believing that Mr. Hunter would not have built the same magnificent expectations upon any other of the thousand and one existing agglutinative dialects which had happened to become the subject of his special study, and had introduced him to some comprehension of the agglutinative structure of speech. Try one of his points. The Sanskrit has taken the position it occupies in linguistic study for certain very definite reasons. It is more ancient than any of its kindred, possessing documents nearly, or quite, four thousand years old. It has been thoroughly studied and accurately compared with other tongues, and found to have a peculiarly antique structure, to exhibit more of the inferribly original features of a certain great family of speech than any other known member of that family. So long, now, as nothing of this kind has been done for the Santali, so long as there are scores of agglutinative languages older than it, of well-established affinities, and with abundant literatures, which, therefore, there is every reason for supposing capable of throwing vastly more light upon the agglutinative tongues in general, so long will linguistic scholars only smile at Mr. Hunter's boyish enthusiasm over his pet dialect.

These, however, are but inconspicuous blemishes in Mr. Hunter's valuable volume, and easily to be excused, as aberrations of the lively and enterprising spirit to which the rest of his work owes so much of its interest. We should hardly have thought of mentioning them, we should not at all have thought of dwelling upon them, if we had to deal only with the "*Annals of Rural Bengal*." But instead of bending his energies to the task of preparing his promised continuation of the "*Annals*," he has ill-advisedly abandoned the department of labor in which

he had already done so good service, and was able to do more, and has entered upon the career of a philologist, having put forth one book which displays all his weak points and little or nothing beside, and now threatening another. The one already out is in tall quarto form, printed on heavy tinted paper, in the most elegant style of English typography, and dedicated by permission (or command, as the advertisements have it) to the Queen. What is this work, ushered into the world with so much pomp and circumstance? Why, a simple list of some two hundred English words, with their equivalents in about a hundred and forty Asiatic dialects! Each word compared occupies a page: at the top stands the English vocable, flanked with its correspondents in French, German, Russian, and Latin; and below, in two stout columns, the names of the hundred and forty dialects, with the answering word in each. Thus each great page contains one hundred and forty words of linguistic material, and the name of every dialect is repeated two hundred times. Such luxury as this the most aristocratic linguistic scholar ought to be content with. Those of more humble taste and means would perhaps be as well pleased to see the matter less showily and more conveniently arranged, and put in the compass of a small octavo pamphlet, in some such series as the "Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections,"—only, even there, the question would be raised, whether the lists were worth the paper and cost of printing.

What has Mr. Hunter sought to accomplish by this book? His introductory dissertation tells us. He furnishes us, first, several pages of very vigorous and pointed discourse upon one of the prominent themes of his other work,—the valuable qualities of the aboriginal tribes of India, the injustice done them, and the ignorance concerning them of their British rulers, who cannot, of course, do them justice without knowing them better. So much is exceedingly good. Mr. Hunter is upon his own ground here, and we heartily wish him as large an audience as can be found to listen to his words. But when we come to inquire into the connection between the dissertation and the lists, we find (quoting nearly his own words) that the latter are put forth as the materials out of which a comprehensive view of the ethnical peculiarities, the social necessities, and the political capabilities for evil or for good of the whole aboriginal people may be constructed, and that they are henceforth to enable every frontier administrator to hold direct communication with the races committed to his charge. Mr. Hunter must have a very strange idea as to how much knowledge of a language will enable one to read the character of its speakers, and to communicate with them. We should like to see him take his Comparative Dictionary with him to Russia, for example, and attempt to com-

municate with the Russians, in the character of a frontier administrator, or in any other character, by the help of his two hundred bare words, in imperfect and inconsistent phonetic transcription, without explanation of their uses, without inflectional forms, without rules of arrangement, without even a model phrase upon which to form others. We imagine that his faith in the practical side of the value of his work would be speedily and rudely shaken. He is, in truth, perfectly wild in assuming that this is the way to furnish useful aid to practical communication. If the materials out of which he has made his selections were worth publishing at all, they should have been published in the utmost possible completeness, with all the explanation and illustration which could be brought to bear upon them, and each language by itself. Even then they would have been but a nucleus for further collections, a foundation for each man to build upon according to his opportunity. The detailed working-up and publication of Mr. Hodgson's collections, along with all that could be added to them from other sources, would have been a work worthy of Mr. Hunter's devoted labor, of the auspices under which the present volume has come forth, of the helpers and patrons it has won. Anything short of that is a mutilation wholly to be condemned.

Nor is the case otherwise as regards the scientific side of the value of his work. In fancying that linguistic science is to be promoted by lists of synonymous words like these he has drawn up, Mr. Hunter commits a portentous anachronism. He would fain roll back the history of the science to the beginning of the century, when it was taking its first feeble steps, with such aids as it could command, and when comparative vocabularies, versions of the Lord's Prayer, and their like, were very acceptable, because nothing better was to be had, and the whole field was a *terra incognita*. He would push us back even beyond Adelung and Vater; for they at least gave connected texts, with such grammatical explanations and additional vocabularies as lay within their reach. But the time for these things is past, and a more thorough misapprehension of the present position and methods of linguistic study is hardly possible than to suppose that it derives any but the most scanty, doubtful, and provisional results from materials of the class here furnished, — or that it values comparative lists of selected words, except as they may illustrate truths arrived at by researches more far-reaching and penetrating. There are, it must be confessed, not a few so-called philologists who are plodding on at work like this, never having heard of the progress which the investigation of language has made during fifty years past, or not comprehending it. We have even been informed that there is in this country a National Philological

Society, whose aim is to draw up a grand comparative list of words from all the tongues of the globe: but such men are not working for science; they are only amusing themselves — and others. Mr. Hunter's volume is fit to be set up on the shelves of these philological *dilettanti*, and to supply them the foundation for just such hap-hazard etymologies and generalizations as he himself sets before us in the second part of his introductory dissertation. It is truly astonishing how many of the vexed questions of linguistic ethnology — questions which have puzzled the most profound scholars, those best acquainted with the tongues involved, of which he hardly professes to know anything — he is able to settle confidently out of hand. With a few convenient axioms to guide him, — such as that this particular letter in the non-Aryan languages is interchangeable with such and such others, — and taking a sufficiently wide range of comparison, he is able to trace the meshes of common speech through the whole of Asia, and even to find significant indications of the ultimate relationship of Aryan and non-Aryan. But let him not imagine that the ties he thinks to establish are aught but spiders' webs, which may soil, but will not obstruct, the hand of the true scholar, as he brushes them away.

The comparative philologist who deserves the name works in a very different manner from Mr. Hunter. He does not pretend to grasp and hold together the languages of a continent. He plants himself upon some point that affords sure footing, and works gradually outward; he takes some group of dialects respecting whose connection there can be no question, and endeavors from the minute study and detailed comparison of them to deduce the laws of their growth and the modes of their mutual relation, exercising a careful historical criticism at every step, both upon his materials and his conclusions. Then he proceeds to bring in and compare with this some other group, in the same cautious manner, confessing the increased meagreness and diminished certainty of the conclusions he can reach as he widens his circle of observation, till he arrives at the limit where the evidences become too faint and uncertain to compel his belief. To work after this fashion, and to beware of dealing with languages which he does not know thoroughly, distrusting all his results in proportion as they are founded on less thorough knowledge, — these are the two fundamental rules for the comparative student of language; and he who disregards them is a mere piler-up of rubbish for those who come after him to stumble over or to clear away.

We keenly regret, therefore, that Mr. Hunter should have turned away from his own work to do what can bring him no credit, and others no advantage; and that he should be proposing to go on from bad to

worse by next supplying us a comparative grammar of all these heterogeneous tongues of which he knows nothing. We hope to learn, that, on returning to his proper field of labor in India, he has come to his senses, and returned also to his proper department in literature. As historian of the Hindu people, we shall be glad to meet him again, and the sooner the better; as a comparative philologist, we desire to hear nothing more of him for many years to come, until he has been to school and learned a sounder method.

5. — *A Modern Historical Atlas, for the Use of Colleges, Schools, and General Readers.* By REV. WILLIAM L. GAGE, Editor and Translator of "Ritter's Palestine," author of the "Life of Carl Ritter," etc., etc. New York: D. Appleton & Company. 1869.

THE Reverend Mr. Gage has attempted a very good thing, but has produced a very poor one. An historical atlas is certainly a desideratum in this community; but we cannot well see that any class of readers will find its wants satisfied by the present collection of maps. The editor himself admits that it is not adapted to the use of historical *students*; and as for general readers, one would think that his aim had been to flatter their vague and inaccurate notions by giving them something equally vague and inaccurate to compare them with. Mr. Gage underrates the historical sense of the American public; a judicious selection from Spruner's maps, omitting, perhaps, some of the details, but preserving the size and general features of the original with precision, would really have met a want and been welcomed. But readers who do not desire any further aid than this atlas will afford them will not be likely to care even for that. If there be any such, they are of the class who read a history because it is "nice," and do not concern themselves much about boundary-lines and strategic points.

One would almost think, indeed, that there had been an effort to avoid even desirable details. It would have been easy, without altering the general plan, and without in the least crowding the maps, to embrace many points which would be very serviceable to the mass of readers. But what shall we think of a map of Central Europe, in the sixteenth century, which does not contain Ghent, Amsterdam, Utrecht, Trèves, Basle, Augsburg, Ratisbon, Munich, or Vienna? or of one of the time of Napoleon which omits Burgos, Badajoz, Talavera, Salamanca, Tilsit, and Elba? Yet these are only specimens of the plan upon which the maps are intentionally prepared.

Details like these are, therefore, out of the scope of the work, which